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Cover story: L&G sales update

Garden tools • NESDA survey results

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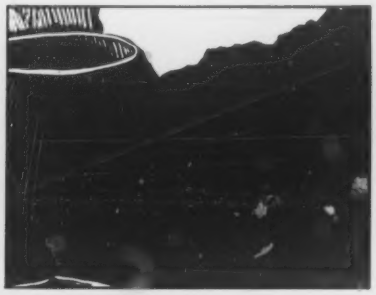

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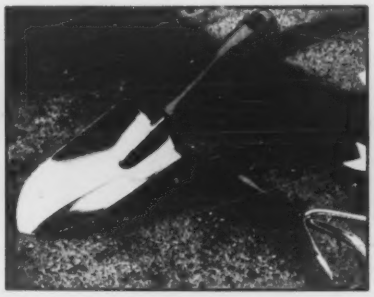

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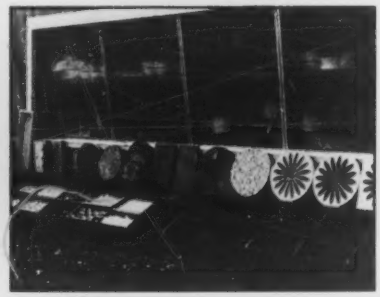

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Did you know?

Sales of lawn and garden products generally reflect the population distribution of the U.S. The top five regions are the East North Central (20%), South Atlantic (20%), Mid-Atlantic (13%), Southwest (13%) and Pacific (11%).

Source: 1988 Outdoor Power Equipment Institute Retail Sales Program.

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L&G sales update

With overall product movement holding steady in 1988, greengoods purchases helped fuel the demand for hardlines and packaged goods—and more customers purchased those products from garden centers and mass merchants.

By Bruce Butterfield, *National Gardening Assn.*

When you think about it, if homeowners didn't have living plants to take care of or if they didn't buy greengoods, they wouldn't have any reason to buy fertilizer, power equipment, insect controls, tools or any of the hundreds of other products sold by lawn and garden retailers. Sales of greengoods such as bedding plants, trees, shrubs, vegetables, flower and grass seed, houseplants and bulbs help create the demand for a wide range of lawn and garden hardlines and packaged goods.

In addition to the fact that greengoods are the largest single lawn and garden product category, in terms of number of buyers and total dollars spent each year, they also help build store traffic, bring in new and repeat business and provide the opportunity for tie-in sales and cross-merchandising. It is estimated that for every $1 consumers spend on greengoods, they spend $3 on related lawn and garden products.

Results from the 1988 National Gardening Survey support this estimate and point to the importance of cross-merchandising at the retail level as a way to increase future sales.

How many purchased

Sixty-nine million American households spent a total of $15.5 billion on indoor and outdoor lawn and garden activities in 1988 compared to 70 million households that spent $17.5 billion in 1987. (See "Participation level; sales off," February 1989 issue.)

A total of 62 million U.S. households or 89 percent of lawn and garden participants purchased one or more types of lawn and garden products in 1988 compared with 65 million households or 93 percent in 1987. These are key results of the *1988-89 National Gardening Survey*, conducted for the National Gardening Assn. by the Gallup Organization Inc.

The results, which will be published in April, are based on the findings of 2,500 at-home personal interviews with a representative sample of the U.S. household population in all 50 states. The results of the survey—conducted in October and November 1988—have a margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points.

The survey measures the percentage of lawn and garden households that purchased 16 lawn and garden product categories and more than 100 specific types of lawn and garden products.

In 1987 and 1988, the percentage of lawn and garden consumers who purchased nine out of 16 lawn and garden product categories was statistically equal. They are nursery products, indoor plants and supplies, insect controls/chemicals, fertilizer, pet/wild bird products, garden hand tools, power equipment, food preservation products and gardening information.

Seven out of 16 categories saw an increase in the percentage of lawn and garden customers who purchased them. They are seeds/bulbs, watering equipment, outdoor living/barbecue, soil amendments/mulch, floral products, plant containers and lawn/landscape services.

In the following paragraphs, the term "buyers" is synonomous with "buying households."

What they purchased

Nursery products were purchased by 54 percent of lawn and garden households (37 million) in 1988 and 52 percent (36 million) in 1987. The best-selling nursery products in 1988, in terms of the number of households buying them, were annual flower transplants (17 million buyers), vegetable garden transplants (17 million buyers), perennial flower transplants (13 million buyers), rose bushes (10 million buyers) and flowering trees/shrubs (6 million buyers).

Indoor plants and supplies were purchased by 53 percent of lawn and garden households (37 million) in 1988 and 50 percent (35 million) in 1987. The best-selling indoor plants and supplies in 1988 were potting soil/growing medium (25 million buyers), houseplant fertilizer (18 million buyers), foliage houseplants (15 million buyers), indoor

Lawn and garden products purchased*

	1987		1988	
	%	Mil.	%	Mil.
Nursery products	52	36	54	37
Indoor plants & supplies	50	35	53	37
Insect controls/chemicals	45	32	44	30
Fertilizer	45	32	44	30
Seeds/bulbs	45	32	56	39
Pet/wild bird products	45	32	48	33
Watering equipment	39	27	50	35
Outdoor living/barbecue	38	26	47	33
Garden hand tools	37	26	35	24
Soil amendments/mulch	32	22	38	26
Floral products	30	21	36	25
Power equipment	25	18	25	17
Food preservation	25	18	24	17
Plant containers/pots	14	10	19	13
Gardening information	13	09	16	11
Lawn/landscape services	09	06	14	10
None	07	05	11	08

*Totals add up to more than 100 percent due to multiple responses.
Source: National Gardening Assn./Gallup Organization

Illustration by C.B. Mordan

plant containers/pots (13 million buyers) and flowering houseplants (12 million buyers).

Insect controls/chemicals were purchased by 44 percent of lawn and garden households (30 million) in 1988 and 45 percent (32 million) in 1987. The best-selling insect controls/chemicals in 1988 were RTU insect controls (14 million buyers), chemical insecticide dust (9 million buyers), water-soluble chemical insecticide (9 million buyers), weed control/herbicide (7 million buyers) and fungicide (4 million buyers).

Fertilizer was purchased by 44 percent of lawn and garden households (30 million) in 1988 and 45 percent (32 million) in 1987. The best-selling fertilizers in 1988 were weed and feed fertilizers (17 million buyers), dry or granular chemical fertilizer (12 million buyers), liquid or soluble fertilizers (9 million buyers), manure (6 million buyers) and blended all-natural/organic fertilizer (5 million buyers).

Seeds/bulbs were purchased by 56 percent of lawn and garden households (39 million) in 1988 and 45 percent (32 million) in 1987. The best-selling products in the seeds/bulbs category during 1988 were vegetable seed (21 million buyers), grass seed (20 million buyers), annual flower seed (13 million buyers), spring flowering bulbs (13 million buyers), summer flowering bulbs (7 million buyers) and perennial flower seed (6 million buyers).

Pet/wild bird products were purchased by 48 percent of lawn and garden households (33 million) in 1988 and 45 percent (32 million) in 1987. The best-selling products in the pet/wild bird category in 1988 were pet food (24 million buyers), pet care products (19 million buyers), wild bird feed

continued...

L&G sales...continued

(14 million buyers) and birdfeeders (7 million buyers).

Watering equipment was purchased by 50 percent of lawn and garden households (35 million) in 1988 compared with 39 percent (27 million) in 1987. Given the drought and unusually hot summer temperatures in 1988, it is not surprising to see that sales of watering products were up. The best-selling products in the watering-equipment category were hose (20 million buyers), hose nozzles (19 million buyers), sprinklers (18 million buyers), hose connectors (13 million buyers) and hose-end fertilizer/pesticide sprayer (9 million buyers).

Outdoor living/barbecue products were purchased by 47 percent of lawn and garden households (33 million) in 1988 and 38 percent (26 million) in 1987. The best-selling products in the outdoor-living/barbecue category in 1988 were outdoor furniture (11 million buyers), barbecue grills (11 million buyers), barbecue accessories (11 million buyers), outdoor lighting (6 million buyers) and fencing (6 million buyers).

Garden hand tools were purchased by 35 percent of lawn and garden households (24 million) in 1988 and 37 percent (26 million) in 1987. The best-selling hand tools in 1988 were long-handled tools (11 million buyers), short-handled tools (9 million buyers), pruning shears/loppers (7 million buyers), sprayers (7 million buyers), and fertilizer spreaders (4 million buyers). (See "Garden hand tools," page 18, and "Retail Workshop," page 8.)

Soil amendments/mulch were purchased by 38 percent of lawn and garden households (26 million) in 1988 and 32 percent (22 million) in 1987. The best-selling products in the soil amendments/mulch category in 1988 were peat moss (16 million buyers), topsoil (13 million buyers), natural mulches such as wood chips or bark (9 million buyers) and seed/soil inoculant (2 million buyers).

Floral products were purchased by 36 percent of lawn and garden households (25 million) in 1988 and 30 percent (21 million) in 1987. The best-selling floral products in 1988 were cut flowers (18 million buyers), flower arrangements (11 million buyers), silk flowers (11 million buyers) and flower arranging supplies (5 million buyers).

Power equipment was purchased by 25 percent of lawn and garden households (17 million) in 1988 and 25 percent (18 million) in 1987. The best-selling types of power equipment in 1988 were walk-behind mowers (6 million buyers), chainsaws (4 million buyers), string trimmers (3 million buyers), power blowers (2 million buyers) and riding lawnmowers (2 million buyers).

Food preservation products were purchased by 24 percent of lawn and garden households (17 million) in 1988 and 25 percent (18 million) in 1987. The best-selling products in the food-preservation category in 1988 were freezing supplies (11 million buyers), canning supplies (10 million buyers), food-processing equipment (2 million buyers) and food-drying supplies (1 million buyers).

Outdoor plant containers were purchased by 19 percent of lawn and garden households (13 million) in 1988 and 14 percent (10 million) in 1987. The best-selling outdoor-plant containers in 1988 were outdoor planter/pots (10 million buyers) and window boxes (1 million buyers). Also included in this category in 1988 was a measurement of season-extending products such as plant protectors (1 million buyers) and row covers/cold frames (800,000 buyers).

Gardening information was purchased by 16 percent of lawn and garden households (11 million) in 1988 and 13 percent (9 million) in 1987. The best-selling types of gardening information in 1988 were gardening magazines (7 million buyers), garden books (5 million buyers) and gardening calendars/planners/journals (1 million buyers).

Lawn/landscape services were purchased by 14 percent of lawn and garden households (10 million) in 1988 and 9 percent (6 million) in 1987. A total of 7 million households purchased lawn-care services in 1988, 2 million households paid for landscape-maintenance services and 1 million contracted landscape design and installation services.

Where they purchased

Garden center/retail nursery was the retail outlet where most consumers purchased lawn and garden products. Following garden center/retail nursery in terms of the number of households that purchased products at that retail outlet were hardware store, mass-merchandiser/discount store, supermarket/drug store, feed/seed store, home center and mail-order.

From 1987 to 1988, the number of lawn and garden customers who purchased products at garden centers or retail nurseries increased by an estimated 4 million households, and the number of consumers who purchased lawn and garden products at mass-merchandisers or discount stores also increased by 4 million households. **—LGM**

The 1988-89 National Gardening Survey, on which this article is based, provides detailed marketing information on the who, what, where, when and why of lawn and garden retail sales. Each year, the National Gardening Assn. publishes the complete results of the survey in a comprehensive 300-page report. For more information, contact the NGA at 180 Flynn Ave., Burlington, VT 05401, (802) 863-1308.

Lawn and garden best sellers

Product	1988 Households purchasing %	Mil.
1. Potting soil/growing medium	36	25
2. Vegetable seed	30	21
3. Grass seed	29	20
4. Hose	29	20
5. Hose nozzle	28	19
6. Sprinkler	26	18
7. Houseplant fertilizer	26	18
8. Annual flower transplants	25	17
9. Weed & feed fertilizer	24	17
10. Vegetable garden transplants	24	17
11. Peat moss	23	16
12. Foliage houseplants	22	15
13. RTU insect controls	20	14
14. Indoor pots/plant containers	19	13
15. Spring flowering bulbs	18	13
16. Perennial flower transplants	18	13
17. Annual flower seed	18	13
18. Hose connectors	18	13
19. Topsoil	18	13
20. Flowering houseplants	17	12
21. Dry/granular chemical fertilizer	17	12
22. Long-handled tools	16	11
23. Outdoor furniture	16	11
24. Barbecue grills/accessories	16	11
25. Rose bushes	15	10

Source: National Gardening Assn./Gallup Organization

Garden hand tools

Garden hand tools may not match the turns that other lawn and garden products make, but the potential for profit is there if retailers put some effort into selling them.

By Gina Kellogg Hogan, *associate editor*

The subject of quality vs. a low price can be argued about virtually any product category, whether it be cars, clothing or perfume. If you purchase a product based on its low price, you generally give up quality. If you purchase based on quality, you are bound to give up a low price.

According to a survey of lawn and garden retailers, the same can be said about garden hand tools. The argument about whether consumers are more interested in a product that will last longer, as opposed to a product that costs several dollars less, was frequent among respondents.

(See "Retail Workshop," page 8, for merchandising tips on garden hand tools.)

In the end, quality won out, but not by much: 45 percent of respondents to *Lawn & Garden Marketing's* November/December 1988 survey on garden hand tools said they believed customers place greater emphasis on quality, while 40 percent said they thought customers were more influenced by price.

"The consumer trend is changing," said Kurt Schultz, owner of Young's Animal, Vegetable, Mineral, a multi-department lawn/garden/pet store in Lockport, N.Y. "The consumer conscience is leaning toward a product to fulfill their needs over a long period of time and not be replaced down the road. The yuppie crowd has a larger expendable income and less time on their hands." They want a store that sells quality products upon which they can rely, he said. "I feel that, as with many products today, the largest buying population prefers quality, even if they may cost more."

But Kenneth L. Robinson, C.E. Sickeler Hardware, Sewickley, Pa., argued that price was more important to consumers purchasing garden hand tools. "The price of high-quality tools has risen to a point where people are buying one or two grades down," he said. "More people are 'making do,' instead of replacing tools."

C. Bruce Hamilton, owner/vice president at Florence Hardware, Omaha, Neb., agreed. "We can take a $5 and a $10 rake, and we can sell the higher quality, $10 rake because people are tired of the junk rake they owned before. But if we have a $15 rake, we can't sell that." He said a definite limit existed on the amount people were willing to spend.

A majority of respondents—68 percent—admitted that, whether a customer actually bought a product for quality or price, quality *was* still of prime importance to them.

What's up to date

Current trends in lawn and garden are pointing to ergonomics and color as being the new waves of the future. Consumers are interested in products that are easy to handle, as well as attractive. But garden hand tools is not one of the categories in which retailers feel these trends are important.

Just over half of the respondents said they thought customers found ergonomic designs somewhat important; one in five said they were not important, and 16 percent said ergonomics was very important to customers. Garden center respondents seemed to think this trend was of greater influence to consumers than the other retailers; just more than one in five saw ergonomics as very important.

Color, which has been popping up on garden tool handles in such vibrant shades as pink and lavender, was seen as not important to consumers by more than one in two respondents. Forty percent said color was of somewhat importance to consumers. About one in 10 garden center respondents said color was very important to consumers.

Helping the customer

Retailers recognized that customers needed some educational assistance in the selection of hand tools from the sales staff. What is this trowel used for as opposed to this one? What size branch will this pruner cut? One in two retailers said they thought educational assistance from a salesperson was very important to customers purchasing garden hand tools. By hardware and power equipment dealers, especially, educational assistance was recognized as significant; 56 percent of hardware

How much room is devoted to garden hand tools?

Most lawn and garden retailers allot between 5 and 9 percent of their total indoor square footage to garden hand tools, according to survey respondents.

% allotted	Total	Multi-dept.	Garden center	Hard-ware	Power equip.
Less than 5%	24%	25%	17%	36%	14%
5% to 9%	25	25	31	22	23
10% to 14%	24	25	35	17	23
15% or more	13	13	10	11	18
No answer	14	13	07	14	23
Median	09	09	10	07	11

Source: November/December 1988 *LGM* survey.

Figures have been rounded and may not add up to 100 percent.

store respondents and 55 percent of power equipment respondents said assistance was very important.

But explaining the product's benefits and uses may not be the only reason customers want assistance. John C. Zerangue III, sales manager and part-owner of Zerangue's Lawn Center, Lafayette, La., said a lot of people enter his store knowing exactly what they need. "But a person wants to be catered to and pampered," Zerangue explained. "You want to try to reach out and have some conversation with this person and make them feel at home."

American-made

Ronald Reagan may be out of office now, but the patriotic mood his presidency stirred in the American public remains; American-made products are in demand. Yet, so are imported, Japanese automobiles. Americans are a fickle lot.

Retailer respondents to *LGM's* survey indicated they, too, want the quality products for which American-made has come to stand; 47 percent said they felt strongly that their distributors supply them with American-made tools. However, as strongly as they feel, they indicated their customers were not as interested in American-made as they were; most of the respondents—49 percent—said American-made products were only of somewhat importance to consumers.

Perhaps consumers aren't as interested in *where* a product came from as what *grade* of product it is. That's Schultz's philosophy at Animal, Vegetable, Mineral. "I have to look at the product itself," he said. "If I feel that a West German pruner is a better product [than its American-made counterpart], I will offer that. If I find an English-made shovel that's a better product, I will offer that."

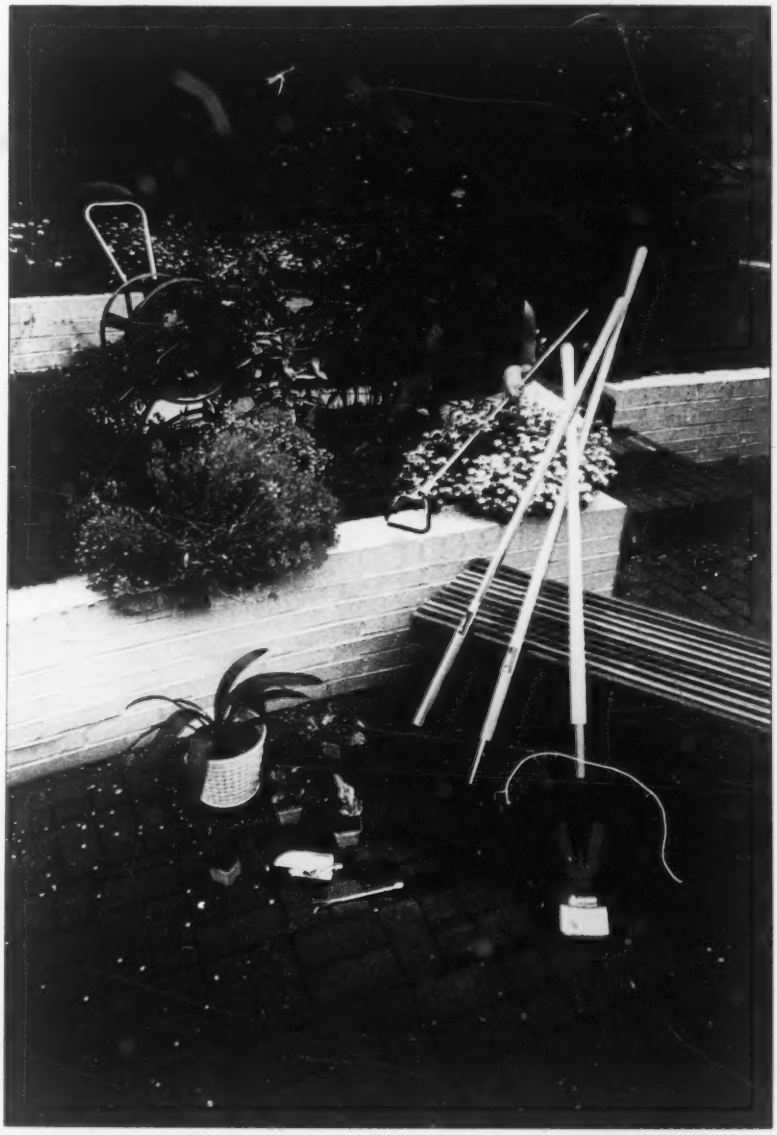

Photo courtesy of Ames

One respondent complained, however, that, because of increasing imports, American-made products were a lot harder to find. "The government's gotten involved so much, there aren't any American-made products hardly available," said Howard Van Horn, owner of Van Horn Excavating, Mineral Ridge, Ohio. He said retailers don't have much of a choice any more in whether they wanted to sell American-made products, because most U.S. manufacturers were being driven out of business by the imports.

Brand-name products

Does a manufacturer-recognized name make a difference, both to consumers and retailers? Yes, somewhat. More than one in two respondents said consumers put some importance on whether a hand tool they purchased has a recognized brand name. Retailers themselves replied similarly; 56 percent said brand names were somewhat important. Having a choice of brand names had similar results; most retailers—43 percent—said consumers put some importance in having a choice.

Retailers feel more strongly about having a selection of products; 45 percent said they thought having an expan-

continued...

sive product-line offering was very important.

Choosing a brand

What exactly influences retailers when they are deciding which brands to carry? Quality products obviously is uppermost in a retailer's mind. But suppliers' programs were rated similarly high. When retailers were asked to indicate the importance of various programs when making the selection of a garden hand-tool supplier, most respondents rated dating, early-order programs, co-op ad allowances, and national advertising as very important; 58 percent said dating was very important, 47 percent said early-order programs were very important, 45 percent said co-op ads were very important, and 48 percent said national ads were very important.

Of somewhat importance to respondents was POP material—by 40 percent—and spiffs—by 36 percent. Planograms were rated as not important by 44 percent.

A manufacturer's guarantee/warranty was of considerable importance to consumers, according to respondents; 48 percent said consumers were very interested in a guarantee/warranty. Less important was good/better/best-type labeling; more than one in two respondents found this labeling to be of somewhat importance.

Competing carriers

Discounters were mentioned most often by respondents—60 percent—as their major competitor in garden hand tools. Hardware/home centers were the major competitor of more than one in three respondents.

What influences the consumer's purchase of garden hand tools?

When selecting garden hand tools, quality is of foremost importance to consumers, say retailers. Retailers rated the following also as "very important."

Selection choice	Total	Multi-dept.	Garden center	Hard-ware	Power equip.
Brand name	17%	13%	04%	28%	18%
Choice of brands	17	25	17	14	18
POP material	17	25	17	14	18
Quality of tool	68	50	59	75	77
Price of tool	52	38	59	47	55

Source: November/December 1988 *LGM* survey.

Figures have been rounded and may not add up to 100 percent.

Of the multi-department store respondents, 63 percent noted discounters as the main competition, followed by competition from hardware/home centers—mentioned by one in four respondents.

Of garden center respondents, 55 percent mentioned discounters, followed by 38 percent complaining of hardware/home centers.

Hardware/home center respondents, however, primarily competed against discounters—55 percent—and other hardware/home centers—22 percent.

Of power equipment respondents, more than half mainly compete against discounters, as well as against hardware/home centers—41 percent.

One respondent said that, even though he wanted to sell hand tools, the field was too competitive for him to do so successfully. Chet Magee, Magee's Sales and Service, Cohasset, Mass., said, "We have investigated selling [garden hand tools]. Due to the purchasing power and competition in True Value, Zayres, Sears, K mart, etc., we have decided against selling this type of product."

Advertising the product

Whether advertising might be the key to successful sales in this category, respondents were just about split. Just more than half said they had advertised garden hand tools; 46 percent said they had not. Most multi-department store respondents—88 percent—said they had advertised these tools; 69 percent of hardware/home center respondents also had advertised. However, 55 percent of garden center respondents said they had not advertised them, nor had more than three out of four power equipment respondents.

Making the bucks

Are garden hand tools a lucrative department in lawn and garden retail stores? Talking to a hundred different retailers might give you a hundred different answers. Comments from retailers indicated that garden hand tools seemed to be a fairly successful aspect of their business.

Most multi-department stores—38 percent—said they earned between $5,000 and $9,999 from these sales. At garden centers, most respondents—28 percent—gained $1,000-$4,999 each year. Hardware/home center respondents earned the most; 33 percent made $15,000 or more. And power equipment respondents earned the least; 27 percent garnered less than $1,000 from these sales.

The median amount earned for each retail category was: multi-department stores, $8,350; garden centers, $2,160; hardware/home centers, $17,500; and power equipment dealers, $1,800. **—LGM**

Photo courtesy of Ames

Dealers unhappy about insurance premiums, companies

Forty percent of the 156 power equipment dealers who responded to a National Equipment-Servicing Dealer's Assn. survey are unhappy with their insurance carriers. While these dealers collectively have claimed losses of about $1.2 million over the years, they pay annual premiums of more than $700,000.

Norman Beck, NESDA executive director, says the survey was conducted to determine whether or not members would participate in a NESDA-sponsored insurance program. Dealer's responses were nearly evenly divided about such a program: 51 percent said they would not invest, 49 percent said they would.

Most of the dealers who said they were dissatisfied with their carriers—39.5 percent—blamed the high cost of coverage—noted by 71 percent—and inadequate coverage—noted by 29 percent.

Beck says the survey results gave the organization the background it needed to move forward intelligently with developing a program. "We have an insurance committee that is working with an agent in California who, in turn, is working with three companies," says Beck. He estimates that it will be two or three months before a preliminary package is negotiated.

Only about 8 percent of the respondents had been involved in product liability suits; losses ranged from $1,500 to $25,000. The average respondent has been in business for about 15 years and grosses about $516,000 annually.

Black & Decker products go to Japan

Shin-Daiwa Kogyo, Hiroshima, Japan, parent company of Shindaiwa Inc., Sherwood, Ore., has agreed to become the exclusive importer for Towson, Md.-based Black & Decker products in Japan. Primary emphasis will be on professional/industrial power tools, and a range of tools specifically designed for the Japanese market are expected to be available this summer.

Other international news for the company includes the addition of C. Witte & Sohn, Stadthagen, West Germany, as a distributor.

ACME expands to Hungary

ACME Motori, the Italian division of ACME North America Corp., Minneapolis, has signed a license agreement with the Hungarian company Intercooperation, Budapest. The contract grants a license to the company to manufacture engines using ACME technology and design. This is the fifth such agreement ACME has granted to another country since 1978.

Intercooperation will begin manufacturing certain engines of the ACME line that meet needs in the Hungary market for 4-cycle engines. Hungary's agricultural industry had depended on imports.

OPE dealers pursue other interests

While the average outdoor power equipment dealer is tied to his business for 60 hours per week, according to this NESDA study, he still finds time to participate in other industry and community groups.

Organization	Percentage participation
Local OPE groups	39%
Business groups	31
Service clubs	28
Nat'l. Federation of Independent Business	25
Church groups	23
American Assn. of Retired Persons	19
National Rifle Assn.	12
Volunteer fireman	10

Source: National Equipment-Servicing Dealer's Assn. 1988 membership survey

Briefs

•**Editor's Note:** Two items inadvertently were switched on sell-through information for the **Ariens Co.**, Brillion, Wis., in the February issue of *Lawn & Garden Marketing*. The company will ship its Sno-Thro POP kit to all distributors in July and its Gard-N-Yard POP kit in January.

•Bill Harper, Bill Harper's Hardware, Zelienople, Pa., won a Yamaha stereo system in a dealer drawing as part of Cypress, Calif.-based **Yamaha Power Equipment's** "Think of It as a Locomotive" campaign, conducted last July at the International Lawn, Garden & Power Equipment Expo in Louisville.

•Robert J. Hill has been promoted to director of marketing for **Kubota Tractor Corp.**, Compton, Calif. He will be responsible for the four product sales groups, product planning, market share and marketing support programs, including advertising and public relations.

•Walter Smith was promoted to Southern regional sales manager for **Rotary Corp.**, Glennville, Ga. Mark Waters was promoted to sales supervisor. He will be in charge of administration and service distributor sales.

•Dennis E. Roehrborn has been named director of marketing for **Lawn-Boy,** Plymouth, Wis. He will be responsible for product management, advertising and sales promotion, sales administration, parts and service, and international sales.

•The Engine and Transmission Group Service Division of **Tecumseh Products Co.**, Grafton, Wis., was given an award of recognition from the Tecumseh Central Warehouse Distributors. The award commemorates 30 years of support to the Central Warehouse Distributor Advisory Council.

•Jeffrey W. Nowlin has been appointed manager of original equipment sales for **The Martin Wheel Co. Inc.**, Tallmadge, Ohio.

•Janet Schultheis has been appointed distributor sales coordinator for **Sten's Lawnmower Parts Inc.**, Jasper, Ind. Her responsibilities will include the coordination of distributor activities, programs, correspondence and special projects.

Plastics legislation would affect retailers, consumers

The Degradable Plastics Act, H.R.5193, would require the Environmental Protection Agency to rule that all plastic articles be made of degradable materials. Ben Bolusky, director of government affairs for the American Assn. of Nurserymen, says the proposed legislation is intended to address the growing environmental dilemma of plastic articles, which are discarded in landfills and can take hundreds of years to disintegrate.

The bill, if passed, says that a plastic item must begin to disintegrate to an "environmentally benign subunit" 180 days after it has been discarded. Then, two years after being thrown away, the item must reach its total benign state.

A main question to be raised is how does a plastic container know it has been discarded as opposed to still being used? Bolusky questions whether existing technology can manufacture plastics that are biodegradable at a known rate.

To retailers who sell products in plastic containers that don't have a quick turnover, this legislation could mean disintegrating products sitting on shelves. For consumers who buy a product but don't use it all in one season, it could mean disintegrating packaging sitting around the home.

Bolusky says he believes the sponsors need to work out some kinks in the legislature, but that it brings added focus to environmental concerns in Congress.

NAHSA announces charter members

The North American Horticultural Supply Assn., which consists of distributors and manufacturers of hardgoods and supplies for commercial nurseries, was formed in 1988 to address a variety of concerns facing the industry. Government regulation, education, sales training and management are some of the topics being discussed by the group.

Charter distributor members include J. Mollema & Son, BWI of Texarkana, Gard 'N Wise and Wetsel Seed Co. Charter manufacturer members include Monsanto Co., Premier Brands, GE Plastics, Whitmire Research and W. R. Grace.

International show attracts strong L&G interest

Visitors to the 1988 International Garden Trade Fair in Cologne, Germany, were interested in lawn and garden products in record numbers. More than 50 percent were interested in hand- and motorized-gardening equipment; more than 50 percent in lawncare equipment; 33 percent in greenery; 30 percent in bio-chemical products; 28 percent in light and water technology; and 27 percent in greenhouses.

Due to increased interest by additional exhibitors and those who want larger booth space, the show will be expanded this year to 918,000 sq. ft.

Exports compete with U.S. products

Lawn and garden manufacturers say Taiwan and Japan top the list for countries whose exports are the toughest competition. In order of most competitive:

Country	Percent indicating	Country	Percent indicating
Taiwan	72%	Hong Kong	11%
Japan	42	Brazil	08
Korea	33	Italy	08
China	30	Canada	06
Mexico	19		
Germany	14	All others	19

Source: 1989 AHMA Government Relations Survey for Manufacturers

Briefs

•**Geo. W. Hill & Co. Inc.,** Florence, Ky., and **Independent Seed & Wire Co.,** Louisville, Ky., have merged into one company—Geo. W. Hill of Louisville Inc. Ronald Stogner is president/general manager of the new company.

•The Environmental Protection Agency approved the concentrate version of Newton, Mass.-based **Safer Inc.'s** Sharpshooter™ weedkiller. The product will be available for the spring selling season.

•**K.I.M. International Inc.,** Norcross, Ga., announced three new manufacturer's rep organizations. Joe L. Simms & Co., Salisbury, N.C., will serve the Southeast. Phillip Davis & Associates, Kent, Wash., will serve Washington, Oregon and Alaska. Selk & Schutte, Madison, N.J., will serve the Northeast.

•**Reemay Inc.,** Old Hickory, Tenn., launched a national TV ad campaign that features Roger and Marianne Staubach. The commercials for Typar® landscape fabric can be seen on such cable stations as ESPN and CNN. Other spring promotions include a dealer incentive program and a gift incentive program for professional landscapers.

•**Evans BioControl Inc.,** Broomfield, Colo., signed a licensing agreement with the University of Florida, Gainesville, to develop, commercialize and market a biological pesticide for controlling fire ants. Field testing in Florida will take place in 1989. The product is expected to have Environmental Protection Agency approval and be ready for sales in the 1991 application season.

•**Kline & Co. Inc.,** a group of international business consultants that produces the study *Consumer Markets for Pesticides and Fertilizers,* has moved to 165 Passaic Ave., Fairfield, N.J. 07006, (201) 227-6262. Its new fax number is (201) 227-6291.

•James Locker has been named president of **Melnor Industries,** Moonachie, N.J. He will manage all business operations for the company's U.S. division. Stephen Glassman has been appointed director of marketing. He will handle marketing for advertising/sales promotion, new products and information services.